

Politics & Social Sciences

Dominique Clément, *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937–1982* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 296pp. Cased. \$85. ISBN 978-0-7748-1479-9. Paper. \$32.95. ISBN 978-0-7748-1480-5.

Like other western democracies, the history of post-Second World War Canada has been written as the ever-expanding growth of individual and human rights. Much of the history of Canada's 'rights revolution' has approached the subject via top-down analyses that focus on the high politics of the Supreme Court. Dominique Clément's new book, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, approaches the story from the opposite perspective, examining how rights activists created a social movement to direct and promote the growth of a 'human rights state', which finally emerged with the passage of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.

Clément's study of Canadian human rights activism is bracketed in time by two major events in Canadian history: the Gouzenko Affair of 1945 and the October Crisis of 1970. Public reaction to the suspension of civil liberties during both events sparked the rise of new human rights associations whose memberships and activities ebbed and flowed depending on the social and political climate. However, he notes that the general social and cultural upheaval of the 1960s tended to reinvigorate the battle for human rights, and placed such organisations on a more stable footing, though not without significant state funding.

The heart of Clément's study focuses on four Canadian rights organisations: the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), the Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH), and the Newfoundland–Labrador Human Rights Association (NLHRA), all of which emerged after 1960. Over four chapters, he examines their different ideological approaches, the impact of state funding on their activities, and their strategies for change. Clément argues that what bound these organisations together was less their agreement on what constituted human rights, and more their conservative strategies for change. All of them eschewed grassroots mobilisation and direct social action to focus on legalistic and statist-oriented strategies such as letter writing, lobbying and litigation. In addition, their actions were often limited by the composition of their rather limited membership. Dominated by white male professionals, these organisations only intermittently reached out to other organisations engaged in the fight for rights (i.e. feminists and homosexuals). In the end, these problems 'hobbled their ability to achieve their own goals' (p. 211).

While the book is a fascinating account of the growth of the Canadian human rights state, Clément's study is not without its problems. Chief among these is the rather scant five-page examination of the theories concerning social movement organisations and their relationship to the ones he studies here. Indeed, one may even ask how much the human rights organisations he studies did indeed represent a social movement from below given their shortcomings listed above and their rather paltry success rate in achieving important legal and institutional change prior to the passage of the Charter. Clément's own conclusions suggest he is also of two minds on these questions. Still, his study is a

welcome reminder that rights and freedoms are not granted by prime ministers and Supreme Court justices, but by determined and courageous citizens willing to struggle for them.
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Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnama and Mark J. Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslim Immigrants in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 224pp. Cased. £40. ISBN 978-0-8020-9787-3. Paper. £15. ISBN 978-0-8020-9543-5.

Based on over 2,300 questionnaires and 60 in-depth interviews, *Diaspora by Design* is a multifaceted investigation into the experiences and beliefs of Muslim immigrants in Canada, the UK, Palestine and Iran. Examining class, education, religious background, gender and family roles, employment and sense of belonging, the study focuses primarily on four groups of Muslims living in Canada: those who emigrated from Iran, Palestine, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The first chapter of the book provides a detailed critique of the idea of a Muslim diaspora. The term 'Muslim' itself is problematised, acknowledging not only the different schools of thought within Islam (which are far more complex than a division between Sunnis and Shi'as), but also a diversity of religious practice and belief (not all people who identify as Muslims are highly religious, and some even regard themselves as atheists). The authors argue that the events of 11 September 2001 brought Muslims in Canada together, in the sense that they became identified first and foremost as Muslims by other Canadians, irrespective of any other identity they may see as equally or more important: 'They are Muslims, regardless of the fact that many, at least until recently, did not care to identify themselves with Islam or be identified as such by others' (p. 12).

However, the central tenet of this book is that the four groups examined often exhibit different attitudes and beliefs and have very different experiences in Canada. Just 14 per cent of Iranian males and 21 per cent of females identified very strongly as Muslims, compared to 85 per cent of Pakistani men and 88 per cent of Pakistani women. Job satisfaction in Canada was much lower among Iranians in Canada than other groups. These sorts of differences may be explained by a variety of factors, including reasons for leaving their home country, differences in educational attainment and socio-economic circumstances. The researchers devote Chapter 3 to family and spousal relations, addressing the difficult topics of divorce and spousal violence. The authors firmly state their view that 'reducing everything to "culture" causes confusion when there is a need for the Canadian state to stand up firmly and clearly to the pressures exercised by Muslim conservative factions in seeking "special" or "exceptional" rights for religiously zealous constituents that would trample upon the individual rights of other community members and should have no place in an open and democratic society' (p. 194).

The interviews with Muslim immigrants to countries other than Canada provide a valuable counterpoint to the study. I found the experiences of Afghans living in Iran to be a particularly interesting example. Reports of the discrimination and bureaucracy faced by Afghans living and working in Iran demonstrate that religion and race are not the only grounds for social exclusion.